

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 004558

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/23/2015

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [FR](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: FRANCE ON CUBA

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: US Interest Section Havana Principal Officer Designate Michael Parmly met June 27 with MFA WHA A/S-equivalent Daniel Parfait to discuss the French position on Cuba. Parfait underlined that the French share our overall assessment of the Castro regime; however, they favor a slightly different approach. GOF priorities include facilitating the transition to a democratic Cuba without bloodshed and reaching out to dissidents as well as the broader Cuban population. Parfait encouraged increased dialogue with the U.S. at all levels regarding Cuba. End Summary.

Shared Analysis

¶2. (C) Parfait began the meeting by noting that the GOF shared our analysis of the situation in Cuba. He indicated that while there had been a great deal of debate within the EU regarding various scenarios that might play out in Cuba, it was clear to him that the regime is in its final stages. The last 50 years had brought little change for the Cubans, who had sacrificed much for the promise of a better future that has never materialized, according to Parfait. While there was a certain national pride in some areas - notably health care and education - Parfait believed that there was an underlying discontent among the citizens. Parfait described what he perceived to be a sense of lassitude, as well as waiting, from the majority of Cubans, who are unsure of what will happen after Castro.

Peaceful Transition a Priority

¶3. (C) Parfait indicated that one of the primary GOF concerns in Cuba was preparing for the inevitable post-Castro transition, a goal he described as a democratic Cuba without a bloodbath. This hope of a peaceful transition was one of the driving forces behind the suspension of EU sanctions in order to facilitate contact with members of the Cuban government. While countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic were opposed to the suspension of sanctions because of their history with Communism, Parfait explained, the policy had led to the Cubans freezing relations with European embassies. It is possible that some of those in the current regime would continue in the next government, Parfait continued, and thus it would therefore be wise to have access and a dialogue with them.

Contact with Dissidents

¶4. (C) On the subject of dissidents, Parfait stated that it was important to defend the courage of those who have spoken out against the Castro regime. Parfait claimed that France had not been among the strongest supporters of Spain's push to extend the suspension of sanctions and, in fact, that contact with dissidents had increased under the new EU policy, both bilaterally and in monthly EU meetings. However, he expressed a degree of caution, noting that some dissidents and civil society members were not characteristic or representative of Cubans as a whole, but rather out for themselves. Parfait expressed satisfaction that the May 20 dissident meeting had been allowed to occur, but contrasted this to the fact that dissidents were still unjustly imprisoned. In addition to interaction with dissidents, Parfait hoped to increase contact with the broader Cuban community. Parfait recognized that the Cuban government prevented the U.S. from communicating as much as it would like with the Cuban populace and admitted that the French had little contact outside of Havana. Parfait wrapped up the meeting by emphasizing that while our methods differed, our goals were the same, and pushing for increased dialogue with the U.S. at all levels to compare impressions and share assessments.

Comment

¶5. (C) It is noteworthy that Parfait did not criticize U.S. Cuba policy during the meeting and mentioned the embargo only once in passing. France has been helpful in securing the passage of resolutions critical of Cuba in the last several sessions of the Commission on Human Rights. Although it has tended to defer to the Spanish on the EU common position on Cuba, France may be among the countries to target when the sanctions come under review again next summer. End Comment.

16. (U) Principal Officer Designate Michael Parmly did not clear this cable before its transmission.
WOLFF